

beside the sea by TolkienGirl

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Summary: You are Eleven. That is all you are, and sometimes, it is more than you can bear. (A tribute to Eleven, the enigma wrapped in a mystery, with an added boost from Robert Louis Stevenson.)

beside the sea

A/N: Just finished this fantastic show, and Eleven is a fascinating, excellent, all-around awesome character. Here's a tribute to her.

Upstairs, there are voices.

They float. The voices, you know, always float. Around you and above you, even when the faces hide.

One of these voices is a woman. *Mom*, Mike calls her. Before you saw her, you could only imagine Mike's house being filled with faces like Papa's.

(Eyes dark, smooth voice. He tells you it's alright, it's going to be alright, but it's not a *promise*.)

You learn that Mom looks nothing like that.

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Mom reads to Holly. You hear Holly answer, and Holly's voice is small.

"When I was down beside the sea—"

"Sea?"

"Yes, honey. Now, listen...

When I was down beside the sea

A wooden spade they gave to me

To dig the sandy shore.

My holes were empty like a cup.

In every hole the sea came up

Till it could come no more."

.

No more, no more. You are quiet all day. Mike brings Lucas and Dustin with him, and he brings something else. It's a word you don't know.

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My holes were empty like a cup.

You are Eleven. That is all you are, and sometimes, it is more than you can bear.

You couldn't kill the cat. You don't realize until afterward that it wasn't the cat Papa was after. It is only then that you are angry, but anger can only last so long, and then you are afraid.

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The bad men are coming. Papa is coming. You know what you did, but you didn't want to. You had to. Mike might understand, but you can't tell him. You can't tell him about the crooked lines of men on the floor, how blood can look darker than water.

You can't tell him about how cold it is in the Upside Down, how it's your fault that the Monster came. Your fault. Papa always held you tight when it was Your Fault.

That is how you knew you had to go.

.

It happens so fast, the pretty dress and the fighting, the bad boys and the bad men, school-water-cold-cliff-*Mike*-friends—

Mike doesn't know that the end is coming.

Maybe it isn't the end you're after. Maybe you are after the end.

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When Mike kisses you, it feels like a word you don't know.